



Late Hook and Ladder leads Vacaville to 34-31 Black and Blue win over Wood

It wasn't to the magnitude of Chris Peterson's famous Statue of Liberty play call to win the 2007 Fiesta Bowl for Boise State.

But it was in the neighborhood.

Vacaville High School's football team ran a perfectly executed hook and ladder play on a crucial third-and-15 to essentially wrap up a 34-31 Black and Blue rivalry win over crosstown rival Will C. Wood Friday night at Tom Zunino Stadium.

Leading 27-25 with under five minutes left in the fourth quarter, Vacaville faced a third-and-long at Wood's 30 yard line. The Bulldogs dialed up a hook and ladder trick play with quarterback Jeremy Villalobos hitting Trevor Marshall about 10 yards up the visiting sideline. As Marshall was about to be tackled, he shuffled the ball to running back Dylan Warfield, who was trailing the play. Warfield caught it in stride, bulldozed a Wood defender and cruised into the end zone for a 30-yard touchdown that stunned the Wildcats.

"It was the perfect play at the perfect time," Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos said with a smile. "We have some fun plays we experiment with every week in practice and that just happened to be the perfect opportunity to try it out. Dylan did a great job with that one-on-one. He finished that on his own."

Wood did well to quickly respond with a five play touchdown drive as Jhalen Grayer found Adonis Dennis with a swing pass in the flat and Dennis did the rest for a 38-yard score to cut the lead to 34-31 with 2:39 left. But Vacaville recovered the ensuing onside kick and picked up one crucial first down to drain the clock and seal the victory in the final game of the regular season for both teams.

"It came down to the wire and they made that last play with the hook and ladder," Wood head coach Carlos Meraz said. "I'm proud of the kids for hanging in there and this is the type of fight we want to go into the playoffs with. Hopefully we can carry this fight into the playoffs and I think we'll be good."

After losing four of its first five non-conference games, Vacaville (6-4, 5-0 MEL) completed the Monticello Empire League sweep to win its second straight solo league title.

Wood finished the regular season 7-3 and 3-2 in MEL play with back-to-back losses to Vanden and Vacaville to end the campaign. The Wildcats took third place in the MEL standings.

Both teams will learn their playoff destiny when the Sac-Joaquin Section releases the postseason brackets on Saturday.

The 2018 Black and Blue Bowl began with Wood reaching the end zone first on a 1-yard dive by Derriyon Jack. That play capped an impressive six play drive that covered 67 yards as the Wildcats went up 7-0 with an extra point from Austin Clark.

Vacaville answered with a six play drive of its own with Nick Smith capping the possession with a 16-yard sweep around the left side for six. Brandon Talton made the extra point to knot the score at 7-7.

The Bulldogs recovered the ensuing kickoff before a Wood player touched it and went the remaining 30 yards for what appeared to be a 13-7 lead, but miscommunication between the referees and coaches resulted in disaster for Vacaville.

Chris Island punched it in from a yard out and Talton came on for the extra point attempt and missed. Most in the stadium believed the Bulldogs had taken a 13-7 lead, but after the referees met for close to 10 minutes, the points were taken off the board.

The explanation was that a chop block was called on the Island touchdown. The Vacaville coaches believed a personal foul was called, which by rule would be assessed on the point after attempt by Talton. Instead, a chop block penalty was called and assessed on the actual running play. Therefore, what Vacaville believed was Talton's long extra point attempt was actually a field goal try, which he missed. The points were taken off the board and Wood was given the ball at the 20 yard line.

The Wildcats marched the ball down the field and added three points on a Clark 27-yard field goal to go up 10-7.

"There was an interesting miscommunication with the officials there," Papadopoulos said. "There's kind of one more hidden score in there. There's a couple situations where we were in a good spot and things didn't work out."

Vacaville later took a 14-10 lead by covering 99 yards in two plays. Warfield got the Bulldogs out of danger with a 44 yard run before Villalobos connected with tight end Mike Brown over the top for a 55-yard touchdown strike.

Wood took its final lead of the night on another one-yard touchdown run by Jack to push ahead 17-14. That play was set up by a tough 18-yard Grayer run down to the one yard line.

Vacaville then took a 21-17 lead into the halftime break as Clayton Watterson scored on a 1-yard touchdown run to cap a 97-yard drive.

After a scoreless third quarter, Watterson put the Bulldogs ahead 28-17 with a 6-yard touchdown run.

Wood answered quickly with a Grayer 20-yard touchdown pass to DeShawn Smith, who caught the ball off a deflection from Vacaville's Nick Smith.

That score cut the lead to 28-24 with 6:51 left in the fourth quarter, but Vacaville held on in large part due to the hook and ladder touchdown on the next drive.

"We definitely put ourselves in some tough spots — I have to hand it to our defense," Papadopoulos said of the win. "I think they did a nice job most of the night. We made some good half time adjustments as well that made a difference."

Warfield led Vacaville's ground game with 158 yards on 17 carries. Watterson carried the ball 14 times for 67 yards and Talon Abramowicz added 69 yards on nine touches.

Villalobos finished 9-for-12 passing for 159 yards and a touchdown. Michael Brown caught three balls for 74 yards and a score. Devon Mills had three catches for 40 yards.

Wood was led by Grayer, who completed 29-of-44 passes for 327 yards, two touchdowns and an interception. He also carried the ball 11 times for 67 yards.

Dennis snagged seven balls for 120 yards and a touchdown out of the backfield, while DeShawn Smith had 64 yards and a score on five catches. Isaac Pewitt posted 48 yards on six catches.